UNITED
NATIONS

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Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/ICEF/1996/21
24 July 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND
Executive Board
Third regular session 1996
16-19 September 1996
Item 13 of the provisional agenda*

FOR ACTION

# REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON DOCUMENTATION

SUMMARY

The present report of the Working Group on Documentation is submitted to the Executive Board in accordance with Executive Board decision 1996/5 (E/ICEF/1996/12 (Part I)). The attention of the Board is drawn to paragraph 6 which contains the recommendations of the Working Group.

* E/ICEF/1996/18.

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96-18978

## I. BACKGROUND

1. The Working Group on Documentation was formed pursuant to Executive Board decision 1996/5 of 25 January 1996. The membership of the working group is as follows:

| Country | Linguistic group |
|---|---|
| Morocco | Arabic |
| China | Chinese |
| Trinidad and Tobago | English |
| France | French |
| Spain | Spanish |
| Ukraine | Russian |

2. In addition, representatives of the Executive Board secretariats of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and of the United Nations Office of Conference and Support Services (UNOCSS) were assigned to serve on the working group.

3. Members of the working group participated in an on-site visit to UNOCSS, including the reproduction and distribution services, and received an introductory briefing from UNOCSS. The group held six meetings between 5 March and 16 July.

4. The principal task of the working group was to recommend ways in which documentation in all official languages could be made available to the Executive Boards on a more timely basis. During the course of its work, the group concluded that the quality and length of reports play a key role in their speedy processing and final availability.

5. At its annual session of 1996, the Executive Board considered the interim report of the working group (E/ICEF/1996/17). The relevant comments of the Board are contained in the report on the annual session (E/ICEF/1996/12 (Part III)). Those comments have been taken into consideration in the final recommendations of the working group which are intended to improve further the quality of documentation submitted to the Board and to ensure its timely availability.

## II. EXECUTIVE BOARD ACTION

6. The Working Group on Documentation recommends that the Executive Board adopt the following draft decision:

The Executive Board

1. Decides to establish page limits for documents to be submitted to the Executive Board, as contained in the annex to the present decision;

2. Requests the Executive Director to enforce, to the extent possible, the page limits set out in the annex to the present decision;

3. Decides that statistical annexes and tables shall, to the extent possible, be presented in addenda to the main document;

4. Further decides to refuse to consider a report that exceeds the number of pages set out in the annex to the present decision;

5. Requests the Executive Director to ensure that documents are submitted to the United Nations Office of Conference and Support Services (UNOCSS) 10 weeks before the start of a session, with the aim of complying with the six-week rule established by the General Assembly and most recently reaffirmed in its resolution 50/206; and to coordinate closely with UNOCSS in all matters pertaining to the submission and issuance of documentation, including the electronic distribution of Board documentation;

6. Decides that, in cases where a report has not yet been issued in all languages six weeks before the start of a session, the secretariat shall make available advance copies of the report at that time, including through electronic means where possible, in the language of submission; and that such documentation be distributed to observers upon prior request at the same time as it is distributed to members of the Executive Board;

7. Calls upon all members of the Executive Board to exercise restraint in requesting reports and policy papers and to consider greater use of oral reports.

## Annex

## PAGE LIMITS FOR REPORTS SUBMITTED TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

### UNDP

1. Policy papers shall not exceed 15 pages;

2. Country cooperation frameworks shall follow a common format and shall not exceed the range of 6-10 pages;

3. Reports concerning budgetary and financial matters shall not be subject to the 15-page limit but shall none the less be as concise as possible, with due regard to the need to present statistical annexes and data in addenda to the main document in line with paragraph 3 of the present decision.

### UNFPA

1. Policy papers shall not exceed 15 pages;

2. New country programmes shall not exceed the range of 7-9 pages;

3. Requests for extensions and/or additional resources for country programmes shall not exceed the range of 3-5 pages;

4. Reports concerning budgetary and financial matters shall not be subject to the 15-page limit but shall none the less be as concise as possible, with due regard to the need to present statistical annexes and data in addenda to the main document in line with paragraph 3 of the present decision.

### UNICEF

1. Policy papers shall not exceed 15 pages;

2. The budget, medium-term plan, Executive Director's report and the reports concerning Greeting Card and related Operations shall not, by their nature, be subject to the 15-page limit, but shall, none the less, be as concise as possible;

3. Country notes shall not exceed the range of 3-4 pages;

4. Country programme recommendations (CPRs) shall not exceed the following ranges:

   (a) CPRs with annual planning levels above $1 million: 15 pages;

   (b) CPRs with annual planning levels of $1 million or less: 6-10 pages;

   (c) Short-duration ("bridging"): 4-8 pages;

   (d) Additional general resources: 3-5 pages;

   (e) "Stand-alone" supplementary funding: 3-4 pages.

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